



Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
**DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING &  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Mitt Romney, Governor ♦ Kerry Healey, Lt. Governor ♦ Jane Wallis Gumble, Director

## **Memorandum**

To: All Interested Parties  
From: Anne Marie Belrose, Senior Policy Advisor  
Subject: 2005-2009 Consolidated Plan Focus Groups  
Date: April 8, 2004

DHCD is beginning to develop Massachusetts' Five Year Consolidated Plan for submission to the US Department of Housing and Urban Development this autumn. The Consolidated Plan will articulate how the Commonwealth will optimize federal housing and community development resources including HOME Investment Partnership Funds (HOME), Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), Emergency Shelter Grants (ESG) and Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA).

In order to ensure that DHCD is targeting the aforementioned resources most effectively, we will conduct five regional focus groups throughout the Commonwealth to elicit feedback from individuals and organizations who partner with us to carry out this important mission, and from the communities and constituents we serve. Our goal is to maximize community participation throughout Massachusetts. The regional focus groups will be held on the following dates at the following locations, and directions are attached to this invitation:

- April 21, 2004 – West Springfield, MA Town Hall
- April 26, 2004 – Auburn, MA Town Offices
- April 28, 2004 – Greater Lawrence Technical School – Andover, MA
- April 30, 2004 – Middleborough, MA Town Hall
- May 4, 2004 – McCormack State Office Building – Boston, MA

We invite you to attend and participate in a focus group in your area, and encourage you to invite colleagues who may not have received an invitation directly. Each focus group will begin at 9 a.m. and is expected to last 2-3 hours. The focus groups will begin with an introduction to each of the four programs, and a brief overview of regional demographic, economic, and housing data. The true purpose of the focus groups is obtain information from participants regarding how DHCD identify and prioritize the housing and community development needs of the participant communities. This will include examination of successes and failures of our administrative process, priorities for funding, and how we can facilitate the local decision-making process and coordinate state and local processes.

In order to prepare participants for the focus groups, we have developed a questionnaire (attached hereto) to cover key concepts. A consultant will be present at each of the focus groups to facilitate the discussion and ensure that all present have the opportunity to participate and comment, and program staff will be available to answer participants' questions. We will record comments and ensure they are considered and reflected as we develop the Consolidated Plan.

DHCD is developing a web page that will be updated throughout the consolidated planning process with information on the focus groups, data that will help inform the discussion, as well as the current Consolidated Plan and Action Plan and other resources. The website address is [www.mass.gov/dhcd/2005plan](http://www.mass.gov/dhcd/2005plan).

In order that we may plan seating for the focus group sessions and ensure that you are not delayed by security at any of the venues, please register your name, affiliation, and the event location you will be attending via e-mail at [conplan05@hotmail.com](mailto:conplan05@hotmail.com).

**PLEASE BE SURE TO CHECK OUR WEBSITE FOR UPDATED FOCUS GROUP INFORMATION!!!**